

WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

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JEFFREY SPAULDING

CHIEF OF POLICE



MEDIA RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 16, 2011

Don't Turn Thanksgiving into a Tragedy This Year, *Buckle Up...Every Trip...Every Time!!!*

The Westminster Police Department is reminding highway travelers this Thanksgiving that the only belt that should be left unbuckled this year, or any year, is the one holding up your trousers--not the seat belts in your car.

"Seat belts have saved more lives than any other single piece of automotive safety equipment," said **Chief Jeff Spaulding**, "but in order for them to work, they have to be used. This Thanksgiving, and every day and night of the year, make sure you buckle up your seat belt and you'll have the opportunity to unbuckle that other belt at the feast table with your family and friends."

Nationally, during the Thanksgiving holiday period in 2009 (which ran from 6 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 25, to 5:59 a.m., Monday, November 30), 303 passenger vehicle occupants died in motor vehicle traffic crashes, including 115 during daylight hours (6 a.m. to 5:59 p.m.) and 187 during night time (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.). One fatality occurred during an unknown time period.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), night time is one of the more dangerous times on the road because seat belt use is traditionally lower. Of the 187 passenger vehicle occupant deaths at night during the 2009 Thanksgiving holiday period, over one-half (54%) did not have their seat belts fastened (where seat belt use was known); while 49 percent in day-time crashes were not wearing seat belts.

"There is no holiday more closely associated with the American family, or with American travel, than Thanksgiving," said Spaulding, "but if you hit the highways unbelted, the faces you could be seeing this holiday might belong to an emergency room physician instead of the faces of your family and friends."

According to the NHTSA, regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect you and your family and to reduce fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. Research has shown that when lap and shoulder belts are used properly, the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants is reduced by 45 percent, and the risk of moderate to serious injury is reduced by 50 percent...so buckle up!!

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